



Dec. 29, 2006

Michigan Supreme Court
Mr. Corbin R. Davis
Clerk of the Supreme Court
PO Box 30052
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: Proposed New Rule 19
ADM File No. 2005-41

Dear Mr. Davis:

On behalf of the Mid-Michigan and Detroit chapters of the Society of Professional Journalists, one of the nation's oldest and largest journalism-advocacy organizations, we write to express our concerns about Proposed Rule 19.

Founded in 1909 as Sigma Delta Chi, SPJ promotes the free flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry; works to inspire and educate the next generation of journalists; and protects First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press.

Proposed Rule 19 would cut off from public access all records of the State Bar concerning its actions regarding legal ethics complaints, unauthorized practice of law, the Client Protection Fund and programs concerning judges and lawyers who are addicted to alcohol, drugs or gambling. Under this rule those documents are only subject to subpoena in a criminal case and to government investigations into related activity.

While we recognize some of these documents may be extremely sensitive in nature, in many cases these documents involve issues in the public interest. The public has an interest in the professional fitness of lawyers and judges working as public servants and whose salaries are paid with taxpayer dollars.

The proposed rule is extremely broad in scope. Not only would it block the public's ability to learn about lawyer discipline and consumer protection, it would also block the public from being able to properly oversee the expenditure of public funds by the Bar or

IMPROVING & PROTECTING JOURNALISM

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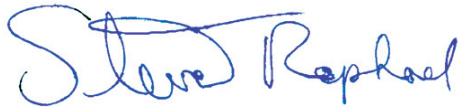
Detroit Metro Chapter
13542 Parkridge Drive
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to monitor the effectiveness of the programs.

The public's right to know about governmental operations is a bedrock of a free society. It is difficult for individuals in a free society to come to intelligent decisions about their government and government-funded programs if the very information required to reach those decisions is withheld.

We urge the Court to reject Rule 19 and to affirm the importance of a free flow of information in the functioning of our state government.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Raphael". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" and last name "Raphael" clearly legible.

Steve Raphael
President, Detroit Chapter
(248) 932-8375, theraphaels@sbcglobal.net

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeremy W. Steele". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeremy" and last name "Steele" clearly legible.

Jeremy W. Steele
President, Mid-Michigan Professional Chapter
(517) 377-1015, jwsteele@lsj.com,